

REMARKS

Claims 3, 6-9, 22, 24, 25, 32, 37, 38, 43-48, 52, 53, 55, 56, 68, 69 and 76-81 were pending in this application at the time the present Office Action was mailed. Of these claims, all but claims 3, 7, 9 and 56 were allowed. Claims 3, 7, 9 and 56 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) on the basis of U.S. Patent No. 6,171,467 to Weihs et al. ("Weihs"). Claim 56 has been amended in the present paper.

Claims 4, 10-12, 15, 19-21, 27, 28, 33-36, 38, 45, 46, 51, 54, 57-60, 64, 65, 70-73, 78 and 79 were previously withdrawn from consideration in response to a restriction requirement. Of these claims, claims 4, 10-12, 15, 19-21, 27, 28, 34-36, 51, 57-60, 64, 65, 70 and 71 have been amended to depend from claims that have been allowed or have been indicated to be allowable. Claims 45, 46, 72, 73, 78 and 79 are now represented in original form as depending from allowed or allowable claims. Claims 53 and 54 have been cancelled.

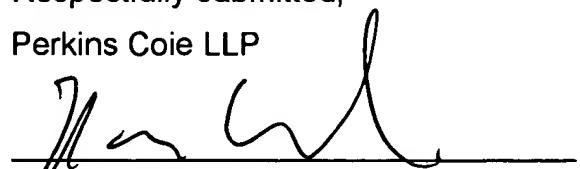
The undersigned attorney wishes to thank the Examiner for engaging in a telephone conference on September 9, 2003. During the telephone conference, claims 3, 7, 9 and 56 were discussed. The Examiner indicated that claims 3, 7 and 9 would be allowable over Weihs without further amendment. With respect to claim 3, Weihs fails to disclose, *inter alia*, a method for removing an electrically conductive material from a microelectronic substrate, with the method including removing the conductive material by passing a varying current through first and second electrodes that are spaced apart from the conductive material of the microelectronic substrate. Accordingly, the Section 102 rejection of claim 3 should be withdrawn. Claims 7 and 9 include features generally similar to those discussed above with reference to claim 3 and accordingly the Section 102 rejection of these claims should be withdrawn for the foregoing reasons and for the additional features of these claims. Claim 56, directed to an apparatus for removing conductive material from a microelectronic substrate, has been amended to clarify that the first and second electrodes are positioned to pass electrical current through a current path that includes the first and second electrodes and the microelectronic substrate when the microelectronic substrate is supported by the

support member. Accordingly, for the reasons discussed above and for the additional features of this claim, the Section 102 rejection of claim 56 should be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, the claims pending in the application comply with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112 and patentably define over the applied art. A Notice of Allowance is, therefore, respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions or believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to call the undersigned at (206) 359-3257.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: Sep. 16, 2003

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